



HEALTH WORKERS' PAY
FIGHT HITS THE STREETS
THOUSANDS JOIN PROTESTS ACROSS BRITAIN
>>>PAGES 4&5



LEBANON RAGES
AFTER BLAST
PEOPLE DEMAND SYSTEM
CHANGE >>PAGE 20

Socialist Worker

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NAVY TOLD TO 'PUSH BACK' MIGRANTS' BOATS AT SEA

TORY PLAN WILL KILL REFUGEES



REFUGEES

Don't fall for government's Channel lies

THE TORIES want to deflect blame for their failures onto people fleeing war, dictatorship and poverty.

We must reject their racist lies about refugees crossing the English Channel.

Ministers claim a "flood" of migrants wants to "break in" to Britain.

There is no flood of people from the makeshift refugee camps in northern France.

Only 4,000 people, forced to get into overloaded boats and dinghies, have crossed in 2020.

Germany and France receive over twice the number of asylum applications a year as Britain.

Just 0.6 percent of the British population is made up of people who came seeking asylum.

Undocumented

Ministers claim there is an "invasion" of "illegal migrants". But undocumented migrants have a right to claim asylum.

And despite a decade of Tory attacks on welfare, right wingers ridiculously claim that refugees come to live off benefits. Once someone applies for asylum, they are denied the right to work.

They have to survive on £37.75 a week.

Labour should be slamming the government's racism. Instead it has largely been silent.

The Tories and bosses—not refugees and migrants—are to blame for the hammering of working class living standards, the coronavirus crisis and the looming slump.



CARTOON: TIM SANDERS

FIGHT BORIS JOHNSON'S RACIST SCAPEGOATING >>PAGE 6



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'You did a bloody shit job'

Pensioner **Joan Drew Smith** delivers her verdict on the bingo calling by royals William and Kate

'I am encouraging government to consider additional powers and stronger deterrence'

Dave Thompson, head of West Midlands Police, wants to hit street parties

'They are dying. That's true. It is what it is'

President **Donald Trump's** reaction after it was pointed out 1,000 people were dying a day in the US from coronavirus

'Just had new veggie Percy Pigs. Delicious'

Labour MP **Wes Streeting** in 2011. The sweet's packaging has now been denounced as 'wilfully misleading'

'Alterations, repairs and replacement of soft furnishings need to be in keeping with the historic nature of the building'

Spokesperson for Commons speaker **Sir Lindsay Hoyle** after it was revealed that spending to refurbish his official home included in excess of £7,500 on mattresses and bedding



Face masks that didn't fit, the tax haven, and who profited

FIFTY MILLION face masks purchased by the government from a private equity investment company can't be used by the NHS because they failed to meet basic safety requirements.

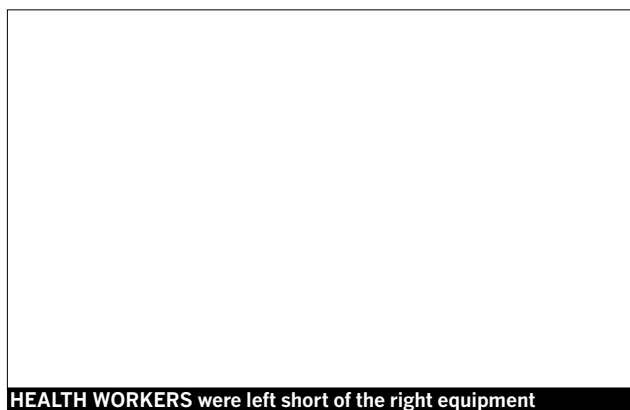
They had ear straps rather than head straps and may not provide an "adequate fixing" around the face.

This scandal emerged from documents filed as part of a legal challenge over Britain's procurement of PPE during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Department for Health and Social Care bought the FFP2 respirator masks as part of a £252 million contract with Ayanda Capital.

The firm advertises that it specialises in "currency trading, offshore property, private equity and trade financing".

It is owned by the Horlick



HEALTH WORKERS were left short of the right equipment

family via Milo Investments, a holding company registered in the tax haven of Mauritius.

Andrew Mills is a special adviser to trade minister Liz Truss.

He also sits on the board of Ayanda Capital.

The contract was the largest single deal published

by the government as part of its PPE purchasing.

The Good Law Project says it represents wasted spending of at least £156 million.

As well as the 50 million failed FFP2 respirator masks, there are 150 million Type IIR masks purchased from Ayanda Capital.

The government has admitted that they also require further testing and have not been released for use in the NHS.

There is another remarkable feature of the Ayanda contract.

Health secretary Matt Hancock's lawyers have now admitted they planned to enter into that contract with a £100 company wholly owned by Liz Truss' adviser Andrew Mills and his wife.

Mills asked—and the government agreed—to enter into it with Ayanda instead.

This was because the £100 company—Prospermill Limited—didn't have "international payment infrastructure."

The Good Law project asked, "Just how much has this arrangement prospered Mills?"

THE BBC has taken on an extra 800 licence fee agents as they expect a revolt over the removal of free licences for over-75s.

Pensioners' campaigners are urging resistance and had called on all over-60s to cancel their TV licence direct debits in solidarity with over-75s and instead offer to pay with monthly, backdated cheques.



A STRIKE by African and Asian workers could be coming at the US Bagram Airfield base in Afghanistan.

Workers who recently demonstrated on the base say the Fluor contracting company pays them less than others for the same work because they're from countries such as India, Kenya, Nepal and Uganda.

Who would have thought the US occupation acts in a racist way?

School says take blood test, get back to work

A SELF-ISOLATING school worker in Birmingham was horrified when academy bosses turned up at her home and bullied her into taking a Covid-19 blood test.

The terrified teaching assistant, who had already requested a test from the NHS, let them take her blood.

Management then refused to show her the results. But they insisted they were negative and ordered her to return to work next day.

Loretta Barratt, the headteacher who ordered management to the worker's home, then held an all-staff meeting.

At this gathering



Loretta Barratt

she publicly breached the privacy of the worker by naming them and recounting the events of the test.

Dorington Academy, where the woman worked, has failed to provide the medical training records of those who drew the blood.

The academy "has put the health of pupils, their families and staff at risk," said the GMB union.

Ex-Labour minister has the Pope as boss

FORMER Labour minister Ruth Kelly was appointed to a top finance job at the Vatican last week.

She should be ideal. In 2007, as Labour's communities secretary, she told council leaders and police chiefs that she wanted them to target Muslim "hotspots".

These were schools, mosques and colleges which were supposedly centres of extremism.

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) wrote to Kelly to complain that there had been a "drip-feed of ministerial statements stigmatising an entire community".



Ruth Kelly

Kelly replied with an open letter to the MCB suggesting they were "passive in tackling extremism and yet expect government support".

Kelly, a member of Opus Dei, opposed an equal age of consent for gay men. In 2010 she became the Global Head of Client Strategy at HSBC bank.

Dividend after state handout

JOHN HOMER, chief executive of construction firm NMCN, has defended the company's plan to pay a dividend to shareholders next month after the company made use of government support.

In its results for the six months to 30 June released last week, the company said it would pay an interim dividend, totalling £1 million, next month.

Construction News reported that Homer said returning cash to shareholders at this point was the right move.

He said, "You have to take a balanced view, and the balanced view was in



John Homer

regards to 2019, trading was what it was. We've got the cash and it's right to pay the shareholders. That's the reason they're invested in the company."

NMCN, like most firms, has taken cash from the government as part of the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme. It has not disclosed the level of support it has taken.

Homer insisted cash from the furlough scheme was not being used to support the dividend payment.

"I emphasise, it is the 2019 profit that we're playing against, not the 2020 trading," he said.

Race gap in firm closures

BACK IN April, economists calculated that the Covid-19 economic downturn had knocked out around 22 percent of small US businesses.

That is startling. What is doubly striking is the racial skew.

Last week the New York Federal Reserve released a study that suggested that the closure rate for white-run businesses was 17 percent.

The rate for black-run businesses, however, was 41 percent.

Black-run businesses have been knocked out at twice the rate of white businesses during the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests.

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Tories try to justify an unsafe return to schools

by SADIE ROBINSON

BORIS JOHNSON has made it his “national priority” to get all children back to school next month regardless of whether it is safe.

In an interview with the Mail on Sunday newspaper, Johnson said reopening schools was a “moral duty”. “Social justice demands it,” he said.

But the Tory plan has nothing to do with justice. It is driven by a desire to push parents back to work.

Under their plans, children would return to schools and sixth forms in “bubbles”—some of which will include several hundred children.

The Tories claim this will minimise virus spread by limiting wider contact with others in schools.

But children will mix with each other on the way to school and at breaks.

Many households will have children going to different schools or in different year groups. So the bubble will break down as soon as they get home.

The Tories say their track and trace system means schools are safe. In reality, the system is in chaos (see right).

Reimburse

And they are giving no money to schools for extra safety measures such as deep cleans. The Department for Education (DfE) says it has “no plans to reimburse additional costs incurred”.

Some say children don’t pass on Covid-19, to justify reopening schools. But while there is conflicting evidence, some research indicates that children do infect others.

A report from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control published last week said, “Children do become infected and, when symptomatic, shed the virus in similar quantities to adults and can transmit the disease as effectively as adults.”

CHICAGO TEACHERS striking last year—now they’ve forced bosses to climb down from reopening in Autumn

BACK STORY

The Tories’ plan to reopen schools has already been disastrous

● In June some ten schools across Lincolnshire reported confirmed or suspected virus cases just eight days after wider reopening of primaries began.

● By the end of the month, suspected cases in schools had almost doubled

● Tories were also forced by opposition of teachers and parents to drop their plan to get primary schools to return before the end of the summer term

It said school reopening could be safe—if measures such as social distancing are in place.

Under the Tory plan, they won’t be. There is general agreement that a full school reopening will lead to more virus cases.

Sir Jeremy Farrar from the government’s Sage advisory group warned that Britain has reached “if not exceeded” the limits of easing restrictions. “We may not be able to reopen schools without introducing new restrictions elsewhere,” he said.

The Tories are gambling with our lives. But it is possible to resist.

In the US, the Chicago Teachers Union threatened to strike over plans

to force students back to school. The authorities scrapped plans for an autumn return and agreed to continue remote learning as a result.

Unfortunately in Britain, some in the NEU union leadership seem too ready to echo the government.

Jerry Glazier from the union’s national executive committee told Channel 4 news, “We’re calling for all schools to open in September.”

Many children are suffering by being out of school. But it is the Tories who are to blame for refusing to make schools safe.

We need to urgently ramp up the fight to force them to do so—and resist any unsafe return to schools.

Dangerous schools’ reopening

Test and trace system ‘failing’

BRITAIN COULD see a second lockdown next month because of Tory policies, a former government adviser has warned.

“We need a proper test and trace system by September,” said Sir David King. “Otherwise full school reopening will put us right back.”

King said the current privately-run system involves “one telephone call and no follow-up”.

“The Serco contract is up for renewal this month,” he said. “They’ve had roughly £100 million so far. They’ll get £300 million if it’s extended. This is not working.”

King said the contract should be given to councils instead. Campaign group We Own It agrees and has urged people to pressure the Tories.

Test and trace figures for England, released last week, show how the system fails.

They show that 72.4 percent of close contacts of people who have tested positive for Covid-19 were reached in the week ending 29 July. This was down from 76.2 percent in the previous week.

Leaked information in July showed that the national tracing service reached just 52 percent of all close contacts.

Now some councils with high infection rates have launched their own contact-tracing operation.

Blackburn with Darwen council in Lancashire and Calderdale council in West Yorkshire have, or are planning, their own teams.

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Schools open in Scotland

SCHOOLS IN Scotland began to reopen to wider numbers of children this week.

Just one in five teachers in Scotland think the move is safe.

A survey of 24,000 teachers by the EIS education union found that only 3 percent were “very confident” that a return to school is safe.

EIS general secretary Larry Flanagan said there is “a lot of anxiety” among school workers, parents and children.

He said plans to increase teacher numbers to enable smaller classes had been shelved to cut costs.

“We don’t accept that the science is saying teenagers are less likely to become infected or that they don’t transmit the virus,” he added.

“That view has been challenged by a number of studies.”

Flanagan added that if education workers felt their school wasn’t safe, the EIS “would be asking whether they would support a safety strike”.

“This is a serious health and safety issue and we do not want teachers placed at avoidable risk from the virus,” he said.

Larry Flanagan

IN THIS WEEK

1969

British troops in Northern Ireland

British troops deployed to Northern Ireland under Operation Banner on 14 August 1969.

The occupation was brutal, repressive and murderous and only ended formally in 2007.



NHS pay fightback breaks out on streets

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE NHS pay revolt took off last weekend as thousands marched in towns and cities across Britain.

Health and care workers are furious at the Tories' refusal to give them a pay rise after the coronavirus crisis.

Around 2,000 health workers marched past Downing Street, central London, chanting, "Boris Johnson hear us shout, pay us properly or get out."

Elaine, an intensive care nurse, came with a delegation from Chelmsford. "I'd like to see Boris Johnson working for 12 hours sweating in personal protective equipment," she told Socialist Worker.

"We saw one of our nurses die on a ventilator.

"Being a nurse is a profession—not a vocation—we need to pay the bills."

Workers' anger is fuelled by Tory ministers' hypocrisy of joining the "Claps for the NHS" at the height of the crisis.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak gave paltry pay rises to 900,000 public sector workers for their "vital contribution" during the pandemic—but left out the NHS.

Cat from Stevenage,

Hertfordshire, came to London with a banner reading, "Where's our vital contribution?"

"I work full time, so does my husband, and we're on Universal Credit—it's not right," Cat told Socialist Worker.

Emma, another nurse, was marching as part of a delegation from UCH hospital in central London.

"I thought that there would be something for us," she told Socialist Worker. "Lots of colleagues have been affected by coronavirus and then there was all the clapping."

Kwame, a nurse from London, says he "appreciates the claps, but it's not enough. They could tax the rich and help staff in the NHS," he said, "the people saving lives get peanuts."

Middle

Tory ministers argue that the NHS is in the middle of a three-year pay deal, amounting to 6.5 percent.

But the pay deal was mis-sold by the Royal College of Nursing and Unison union leaderships in 2018.

Workers were led to believe that they would receive more money in their pay packets than they did.

And the deal came on the back of a ten-year pay freeze under Labour and Tory governments, which overall has led to a 20 percent pay cut in real terms.

Yei, another nurse in London, says she's "already relying on credit cards".

"It's very difficult for people," she said. "As soon as things return to normal, they just kick us."

The health workers are right to demand a 15 percent increase and fight for it now, not wait for the union leaders. The protests showed the power of grassroots initiative and workers need to keep organising themselves and put pressure on the union leaders to fight.

The campaign is organising a day of workplace rallies on 26 August.

Every trade unionist, socialist and campaigner must get behind the pay revolt and deliver a blow to the Tories.



AROUND 2,000 health workers marched through the heart of London

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

Revolt led by first-time activists demands, 'We will not be ignored'

THE MAJORITY of health workers at the forefront of the pay revolt were not activists before now.

In Chesterfield—where around 450 people marched—the protest was organised by nurse Matt, who'd never done anything like it before. "The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted how the NHS is an underfunded service, how staff put their lives on the line to help people," he told Socialist Worker.

"The public knows we are overworked and understaffed and that's bad for patient and staff safety."

He added that they would "continue to fight" and health workers "will not be ignored".

Kim, a community nurse in Plymouth and another first-time organiser, says there was "good support" from health workers and others. "We've all just had enough of being left behind," she said.

"Enough of being underfunded, understaffed, underpaid."

Around 500 protesters gathered in Glasgow, many clutching home-made placards. Some declared, "No to public sector inequality," and, "The only good Tory is a suppository."

And around 500 health workers and their supporters also protested in Newcastle. Nurse and protest organiser Sarah Richardson said, "They've neglected us, they've ignored us. Their claps, their words



Hundreds of health workers took part in Swansea's protest PICTURE: MARTIN CHAPMAN

of sentiment are not really meaningful."

In Sheffield, around 350 people marched through the city centre. The protest, which was organised at a grassroots level, received support from the Rotherham and Sheffield trades councils.

An angry demonstration of up to 300 people and led by young health workers filled College Green in Bristol. Anti-racism was a big focus of many speeches, after a local black NHS worker was hit by a car in a racist attack in July.

Around 80 people joined a protest in Ipswich. They marched from Christchurch Park into town, then rallied and heard nurses speak of their struggle.

Meanwhile in Dorchester, NHS dietician Lynne Hubbard, said, "Around 100 people protested and marched."

"It included physiotherapists, junior doctors, nurses, dieticians and GPs from the Dorset county hospital, mental health services and the community."

Around 100 health workers and their supporters joined the pay protest in Portsmouth. This included a rally, two-minute silence for NHS staff who died of coronavirus casualties and a march to Southsea Common.

Protests also took place in Brighton, Oxford, Coventry, Manchester, Wigan and many other towns and cities.

Thanks to everyone who sent in reports

Union wage claim does not match what workers need

ACTIVISTS AT the forefront of the pay revolt have come out against union leaders' attempts to dampen down workers' demands.

The Unison union has now issued a demand for a £2,000 pay rise for all health workers. It says that the increase should come "as soon as, and not wait till next year".

Pushing

The Royal College of Nursing is rumoured to be pushing for a bigger one.

The Unison and RCN leaders were at the forefront of pushing the three-year pay settlement. The Tories are using this shoddy deal, which was pushed by union leaders, as an excuse

to not pay NHS workers.

Anthony Johnson is an organiser for Nurses United group, which is arguing for a 15 percent pay rise.

"Across the country, there are now thousands of NHS workers self-organising and fighting for a 15 percent pay rise," he told the Nursing Notes website.

"It is a shame that Unison as the largest health union is only going for a single pre-tax rise of £2,000 across the board."

"In stark contrast, the Royal College of Nursing at least is rumoured to be going for a double-digits percentage."

"The unions are supposed to go big

and fight for what the members actually want, not for what they might think they can get," he said.

The union leaders have pursued a "social partnership" strategy with ministers and bosses. They hope to keep a seat at top negotiations by not rocking the boat, in order to win small improvements at work.

This strategy has failed to deliver for health workers.

Union leaders have presided over a decade of stagnating wages, cuts, privatisation and now the coronavirus deaths of their members due to lack of proper safety kit.

It's time to fight—and for more than the crumbs.



A march from St Thomas' hospital where Boris Johnson was treated for Covid-19

'We have to rise up in unity'

SEVERAL hundred health workers organised a feeder march from

St Thomas' hospital, in central London, to last Saturday's protest.

It came after a march from the hospital to Downing Street at the beginning of the month.

Chants of, "Boris, we don't want your clap—we want our money back," and, "Enough is enough" rang out as people marched across the road on Westminster Bridge. Lana, a nurse

in London, came to her first protest because "we need to be heard".

"It was very, very disappointing, very heart-breaking to be left out after we treated Boris Johnson," she told Socialist Worker.

Promised

"Afterwards he said he understood that we were underpaid and promised that changes were coming."

She added, "I felt like I couldn't sit down anymore—we have

to rise up in unity for what we deserve."

Another nurse said she was "disgusted" by the Tory pay policy "especially after we healed Boris Johnson".

Before the march set off across the bridge, nurse and protest organiser Mark Boothroyd told the crowd, "This is the start of the NHS pay revolt."

He said it was the "beginning of the end" of poverty pay, budget cuts and privatisation of the NHS.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

A JOBS MASSACRE HAS BEGUN—TIME TO FIGHT

B RITAIN IS in the middle of a horrific jobs slaughter—some 730,000 jobs have already gone since March. It's not just people losing their jobs—new figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) show people are also earning less and working hours are at a record low.

Some 2.7 million people are now claiming out of work benefits—double the level before the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite the huge changes, the 3.9 percent unemployment rate remains the same because the ONS doesn't count people who are out of work but not actively looking for a new job.

This way of collecting data obscures the true figures.

Many of these people were sacked during the pandemic but can't go back to work.

It could include shielders who don't have a safe workplace to go back to or parents who can't find childcare to enable them to work (see pages 10&11).

Despite the Tories' boasting about its furlough scheme, it doesn't go far enough in protecting people's livelihoods. Some 7.5 million people are

temporarily away from work, including 300,000 people not working and not being paid.

This is just the beginning of a howling recession. Chancellor Rishi Sunak's "job retention scheme" is due to be axed in October, and is already in the process of being wound down now.

But the money is there. The Tories are only too happy to throw huge bailouts at companies who claim they are about to go under.

The Tories' plans are all about bosses restoring profits, while they sweep away support for workers. So Sunak has promised £1,000 for bosses if they re-employ furloughed workers.



This is a crisis—and the trade unions should start acting like it's a crisis

END UNFAIR EXAM SYSTEM

C LASS, NOT ability, determines what grades you get in school—and the exams fiasco in Scotland made that explicit.

Students unable to sit exams due to the pandemic were graded by their teachers. But these estimates were then fed into a "moderation" system that dragged a quarter of the results down.

The pass rate for students taking the Highers exams in the poorest areas was cut by double the rate of those from the richest

backgrounds. Students weren't judged on their abilities, but on how "good" their school.

Many students have rightly protested that their postcode determined their results.

The same is happening in England. Teacher assessed grades haven't been used to calculate the "vast majority" of GCSE grades according to the Times Educational Supplement (TES).

And one exam board told the TES that around 60 percent of grades for popular A-Level

subjects are based purely on statistical modelling.

This modelling traps students into their class position. It says that you're less likely to achieve high grades if you attend schools in poorer areas.

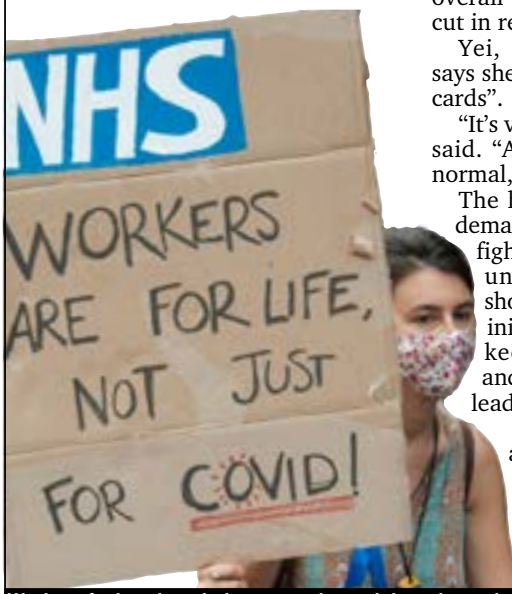
Fury at the injustice in Scotland has pushed first minister Nicola Sturgeon to pledge changes. That's good—but temporary alterations are not enough.

The entire exam system is a sham that's rigged in favour of the rich. It needs to go.

Breakfast in

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Workers feel as though they were clapped then slapped

ANALYSIS

CHARLIE KIMBER



Battles inside Labour reflect party's limits

A VICIOUS battle is being fought inside the Labour Party over a dizzyingly complex series of leaks, rumours and court cases.

It is the shadow of the shadow of real struggle. But it's also revealing about why Labour fails.

Last week Jeremy Corbyn put his name to a document that accuses "senior paid employees of the party" of "sabotage" during the 2017 general election. It said Labour officials were uncooperative and refused to allocate resources to winnable target seats.

This has fed into the debate around an internal Labour inquiry, chaired by Martin Forde QC. The inquiry follows the leak of an 860-page dossier that contained WhatsApp chats and emails from senior executives at Labour's headquarters.

It claimed anti-Corbyn officials had not only obstructed efforts to combat antisemitism but hampered the leadership, potentially depriving Corbyn of a term in Downing Street.

Alleged comments from officials in the report include discussion of "hanging and burning" Corbyn. Another hopes that a young member "dies in a fire" while a staffer suggests they tipped off a journalist about Diane Abbott crying in toilets.

Corbyn's allegations of sabotage were met with derision by the Labour right. In some quarters there was overt admission that it would have been right to do everything possible to obstruct Corbyn.

Journalist John Rentoul wrote, "The problem with Corbyn was never that he was unelectable, but that he would have been a disaster if he had been elected."

Rentoul, once described as "probably the most high-profile defender of Tony Blair's record in the British media", is a reliable guide to how the Labour right thinks.

By Corbyn being a "disaster" they mean he might have upset the rich and powerful. And he might have encouraged the idea that there was an alternative to business as usual and imperialist war.

Corbyn was undoubtedly undermined by the right.

Joe Ryle previously worked for Labour. He wrote last week that in the early days after Corbyn's election "one aide aptly renamed the party's HQ from its official name—Southside—to the 'Darkside'." Ryle said the term "quickly caught on—reinforcing a sense of them and us".

Blocked

He also spoke of "press releases regularly blocked from going out, staff members briefing against Corbyn's office, an almost constant refusal to share content on the party's social media platforms and the coordination of staff resignations to damage the party".

But what nobody on the Labour left seems to be asking is why, given all this evidence, Corbyn and his allies did not immediately start a push to drive out the saboteurs and their colleagues in parliament.

The answer, which reveals a key part of Labourism, is that "unity" between left and right is central to Labour's electoral project. Corbyn and others, such as Unite union leader Len McCluskey, blocked moves towards real reselection and accountability of MPs.

The left meekly talked about unity while its enemies were prepared to destroy the party rather than allow Corbyn to win.

The concentration on the disgusting internal manoeuvres by the right obscures more basic points.

After the 2017 election Corbynism became less radical, even less centred on resistance and organisation in workplaces or on the streets. Instead the left swallowed the idea that Corbyn had to be "prime ministerial". Again this was typical of Labourism—elections are what matters.

Socialists should always be for the Labour left against the Labour right. But they also have to recognise that, even at its best, Labourism is not going to transform society.

A left that couldn't effectively confront the right in its own party can hardly deal with the pressures of global capital and the state.

The obsession with Corbyn-nostalgia matters because big struggles are coming. Every day there is more news of job cuts and frequent predictions of mass unemployment.

The need for resistance focused on the workplaces and the streets, not parliament, is more urgent than ever.

BRITAIN'S BORDER force Dover—the Tories want to make it harder for refugees to enter Britain

Tories' racist migrant plan is a death sentence for refugees

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE GOVERNMENT is using racist scapegoating against desperate refugees trying to cross the English Channel and reach safety.

The Tories this week intend to develop a "battle plan" with their French counterparts.

The threat came as the total number of refugees who made it across the channel reached 3,950 since the beginning of the year.

Hundreds of refugees who have fled war, poverty and dictatorship live in makeshift settlements across northern France and Belgium.

Home Office minister Tory Chris Philp and French interior minister Gerald Darmanin met in Paris on Tuesday.

Illegal

Philp said the aim of the meeting was to "stop these illegal migrants from getting in the water in the first place".

A spokesperson for the French interior minister said, "A battle plan against the illegal sea crossings, drawn up in collaboration with the British authorities, is in the process of being finalised."

The Tories are militarising the border.

Home secretary Priti Patel has asked the Royal Navy to stop refugees coming

on small boats across the channel.

According to a Whitehall source quoted in the Times newspaper, one method being discussed is "push back".

"Australia does an operation they call 'push back' and it has been successful," the source said.

"It is one option we are looking at."

This potentially lethal move would see the Royal Navy block boats from coming into British waters

and turn them back. Patel whined that once boats reach Britain "we're duty bound to help".

A source added, "At the moment our patrols are not able to turn them back if they think there is a potential risk to life."

It's a disgraceful admission that the Tory plans will put lives at risk.

Patel has also appointed a former Royal Marine commando as a "clandestine Channel threat

commander" to make the route "unviable".

One of commander Dan O'Mahoney's deployments was in Iraq.

Many refugees, including some in northern France, have fled the country because of the chaos unleashed by the West's invasion.

O'Mahoney is expected to push the French authorities to take a harder line against refugees.

Harassment

Refugees already face daily police harassment in northern France.

And police brutality and camp clearances have increased since Darmanin was appointed interior minister at the beginning of July.

He is a vicious right winger, a former Tory who is now part of president Emmanuel Macron's neoliberal party.

Darmanin has called police brutality "legitimate violence". He said allegations of brutality made him "choke", echoing the words of a man who was murdered by cops in January.

Police and border guards' brutality will not deter desperate people. It will only make their lives harder and the journey across the channel deadlier.

The only solution is to open the border and let them in safely.

Lies over 'smugglers'

THE TORIES claim they are targeting people smugglers, not refugees.

Home secretary Priti Patel said, "We are working to address many of these long-standing issues and make this route unviable by arresting the criminals facilitating these crossings and making sure they're brought to justice."

Smugglers are small-time gangsters who profit from racist border regimes in Britain and the European Union. But the chief criminals who

enable it are in Whitehall.

Refugees would not have to rely on traffickers if they could take safe and legal routes to Britain.

Making the routes even deadlier will not lead to fewer traffickers.

Instead it will push more desperate people into the hands of the smugglers.

Heatwaves show need for action on climate

People are paying with their lives as extreme weather hits across the world, reports Sarah Bates

CLIMATE CATASTROPHE is unfolding across the globe with devastating floods battering India and South Korea.

Britain was also experiencing a prolonged heatwave, as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

A high of 36.4 degrees—the hottest August day in 17 years—was recorded at Heathrow, west London, last Friday.

The Met Office said, “Seeing temperatures of 35 degrees or more in Britain is rare.

“But what’s also rare is seeing them lasting for a couple of days or more and that’s what we’re seeing at the minute.”

Ilan Kelman, a professor of disasters and health at University College London, said the rise in temperature posed a serious risk to vulnerable people.

“These temperatures are unfortunately in line with the expectation for heat under climate change, which is one of the most concerning health impacts,” he said.

“Without stopping human-caused climate change, these levels of summer heat and humidity will become regular.”

He said this would “make it highly dangerous for us to be outdoors and even indoors without continual cooling”.

Occupation

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is preparing to take on climate chaos with its next big occupation.

It plans a rebellion on 1 September in London, Manchester and Cardiff “to disrupt key powers and parliament until they respond to the climate and ecological emergency.”

Activists are demanding that parliament debate XR’s demands for climate action.

They are also promising a “civilly disobedient long weekend” over 28-31 August where local groups will stage smaller-scale actions.

The hot weather comes as a new report revealed that heatwaves could kill as many people as all infectious diseases combined

BACK STORY

Extreme weather has hit people across the world

- India and South Korea are experiencing severe flooding
- Britain is also in the middle of a prolonged heatwave with temperatures reaching a 17-year high in some parts of the country
- A new study shows that heatwaves could kill as many people as diseases by 2100
- The poorest people will be hit the hardest

by the end of this century. It indicated that if greenhouse gas emissions continue to be pumped out at a similar level, heat waves will kill an additional 73 people for 100,000 by 2100.

A study by the Climate Impact Lab indicated that in areas such as Bangladesh, Sudan and Pakistan the rate could jump to 200 per 100,000.

The hottest and poorest parts of the world are already experiencing rapidly accelerating climate chaos.

In the southern Indian state of Kerala, at least 22 people were killed after monsoon-season floods triggered a landslide.

A further 44 people remain missing at a settlement for tea workers and at least 20 houses for workers were swept away.

The region is no stranger to ecological disaster. Kerala fell victim to severe floods in August 2018 when thousands of homes were swept away and over 400 people were killed.

And in Sudan a disastrous downpour has killed at least 20 people, while 345 houses were destroyed or badly damaged.

Climate disaster isn’t some distant prospect—it is a process already unfolding across the globe.

Every day of inaction by polluting bosses and corrupt governments brings us closer to disaster.

For details of XR events go to bit.ly/joinrebellion



SPEAKERS TALKED about the long history of police violence in north London

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

Hundreds rally against police killings and stop and search in north London

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

OVER 700 people gathered in Tottenham, north London, last Saturday to protest against police brutality.

They assembled outside the doors of the police station—and victims of the cops’ violence spoke about their experiences.

Camden resident Mina Agyepong, said her son had been left “traumatised” by the police.

Her son Kai was arrested as armed police raided her home after he was seen playing with a toy gun in his garden.

“The police put my son—a 12 year old—in handcuffs.

Criminalised

“My son was criminalised in his own home. He was doing nothing but playing with his toys in his home.

“He’s also angry and I’m worried about how he’ll react to the police from now on,” she said.

Cops shut the doors to the station as police helicopters circled above the crowd.

Activists plastered the doors with posters demanding “No



Anger at the police

more police violence, no more police racism, no more police impunity.”

Protester Grace told Socialist Worker that, “The police are scared of our unity, that’s why they shut their doors today.”

A current of anger ran through the protests as police had arrested local youth workers and raided the offices of the 4Front youth project in north west London on Friday night.

One 14 year old was arrested on suspicion of possessing cannabis and two youth workers were arrested on suspicion of

obstructing an officer.

A further person was arrested after people gathered outside Colindale police station in protest at the police’s behaviour.

One youth worker said he and a colleague had been arrested “for doing our jobs”.

In a video that the group shared on social media young black youth workers are seen being dragged across the ground by the police.

They were questioning the arrest of the teenager who, they say, was held for over 40 hours at a police station without a parent or guardian.

Ahmed, a Tottenham resident who is involved with 4Front, told Socialist Worker, “When the group tried to stop the police vans from moving, police officers showed up in large numbers.

“People that are trying to improve young people’s lives are being met with violence from the police.”

One of the youth workers at the organisation told the crowd, “They dragged me on the floor, and they put me in a police van—a metal box—on one of the hottest days of the year.”



All-female health staff stage strike across India

Hundreds of thousands of women workers tackling Covid-19 walked out over pay and working conditions

AN ARMY of 600,000 virus-hunting women health workers struck in India last week.

The workers, called Ashas or Accredited Social Health Activists, are playing a vital role in tracking and tracing people with coronavirus.

In the past they have been credited with helping eradicate polio and reducing the number of women who die in childbirth.

But the fight against coronavirus has pushed the all-female force to breaking point.

“[We’re] working from 7am to 5pm and we only get 2,000 rupees (£20) a month—and no masks or sanitiser,” said Sulochana Rajendra Sabde, an Asha in Maharashtra.

Sabde is yet to be paid the extra 2,000 rupees a month promised by the state government for virus-related work.

“We have to maintain so many documents for a measly sum which is also never on time,” she said. “The government has no place for us in its heart.”

Strikers are demanding better pay—and to be paid on time. They also want their legal status enshrined so they earn at least a guaranteed minimum wage.

Many Ashas report having little or no protective equipment, despite working in slums where the virus is spreading fast.

Infections

India already has the third highest number of infections in the world. The number of cases grew extremely rapidly from a relatively low level in the spring.

A record daily rise in infections on Friday of last week took the total number of confirmed cases to over two million. The rise came on the same day as the workers began their two-day strike.

Asha Saira Anwar Sheikh was given masks and gloves but no protective wear. She died of Covid-19 in June, leaving behind her husband and four children.

As many as 20 Ashas have died in the outbreak. “She was the literate

BACK STORY

Health workers in India staged a two-day strike last week

- The all-woman workforce has been helping to track and trace people with coronavirus
- But they are furious as the government refuses to recognise their vital work
- Strikers say they work long hours for low pay, and complain that their pay is often delayed
- The strike came as virus cases in India, one of the worst-hit countries, passed two million

one among the two of us,” said her husband Anwar.

“She gave 11 years of her life to this work and there’s been no help from the government.”

Anwar has been unable to claim the insurance promised to Ashas’ families by Narendra Modi’s hard right government.

Many of India’s poorest live in fear of being diagnosed with the virus.

They know their chances of returning from government virus recovery camps are slim.

That puts Ashas in even greater danger.

If they alert officials to someone with the signs of infection, they can be set upon and beaten.

But these are scant concerns for India’s middle classes and the celebrity-obsessed media.

The hot news on all channels this week was that Bollywood star Amitabh Bachchan appears to have recovered from coronavirus and is out of hospital.

The news will surely come as a relief to those risking their lives at the sharp end of public health in one of the most infected countries in the world.



On other pages...

‘We are fighting whole system’—resistance in Lebanon >>Page 20

EASTERN EUROPE

Fury at rigged presidential election sparks big demonstrations in Belarus

THOUSANDS OF defiant protesters clashed with riot police on the streets of Belarus in eastern Europe on Sunday.

Police used stun grenades, rubber bullets and water cannon against demonstrators. A human rights group said one protester was killed and about 120 arrested.

The protests erupted after an exit poll said that the current president Aleksander Lukashenko had won an election with a massive majority. The official result on Monday claimed he won over 80 percent of the vote.

Vote

In 2015 Lukashenko won the presidency with 85.3 percent of the vote in another rigged election.

Now protesters and Lukashenko’s opposition say the latest election was also rigged.

Hundreds were arrested at protests across the country. Plain clothed police officers and security forces were reported to be abducting protesters from the streets.

“I have friends who have been arrested for not doing anything,”



Aleksander Lukashenko

said Valery, who was attending a protest. “One friend brought food for people and got arrested.

“There is no freedom of speech.” Lukashenko has been in office since 1994.

His 26-year presidency has been marked by brutal repression of those who speak out against him and his government.

Lukashenko has described Covid-19 as nothing more than a “psychosis” and has done virtually nothing to halt the spread of the virus.

This year Lukashenko faced his biggest electoral challenge yet, from Svetlana Tikhanovskaya.

Tikhanovskaya was initially a stand in for her husband Sergei Tikhanovsky—a popular YouTube blogger. Tikhanovsky was arrested

ASHA WORKERS protesting over pay last month (above) and receiving face shields and other equipment from the Mahila Congress during their strike last week (left)

PICTURE: @MAHILACONGRESS/TWITTER

after he tried to register to become a presidential candidate.

After managing to register, Tikhanovskaya drew tens of thousands of people to her campaign rallies. She was endorsed by a coalition of forces opposed to Lukashenko.

An estimated 63,000 people attended her campaign rally at the end of July.

Officially Tikhanovskaya won just 9.9 percent of the vote. But her campaign said she had been polling at 70-80 percent in some areas.

Tikhanovskaya is the sort of centrist figure who will be backed by the US and its allies.

The Donald Trump administration, fresh from beating, gassing and arresting Black Lives Matter protesters, has hypocritically criticised Lukashenko.

The protests against Lukashenko are a positive sign of a fight for democracy. The danger is that the militancy on the streets is pulled behind neoliberal and pro-European Union forces that care nothing for ordinary people.

Women's pain is trivialised

I WAS appalled to see that a scientific study had been carried out that tried to link women's attractiveness to endometriosis—a disorder which affects female reproductive organs.

This study tries to say that women with the disorder are more attractive, with a smaller waist and bigger breasts. Measurements were taken from women without their consent for this study.

It's taken me over ten years to get diagnosed with endometriosis.

The pain makes it an utterly debilitating disorder that has affected my work and social life.

I have been misdiagnosed and told by a doctor that if I just got pregnant then it would get better.

There is no cure for endometriosis yet.

And there isn't even a plan for people with the disorder to effectively manage pain.

So to hear that funding had gone into a study that doesn't try to cure endometriosis, nor even try to help anyone manage their pain, but instead judges women on their perceived attractiveness was shocking.

I have been dismissed, ignored and told that my suffering wasn't real countless times by health professionals.

We must take women seriously when they are in pain, and fund research into actually helping us—not judging us on our bodies.

Ella
Central London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

Rhodes fallen in Stortford

WE HAVE heard great news that the Rhodes Birthplace Trust in Bishop's Stortford has at last succumbed to pressure and said it will change the name of The Rhodes Arts Centre.

It was named after the racist colonialist Cecil Rhodes.

However, they have not accepted that it should be named after a black person as was demanded by both Stortford Against Rhodes and Stand up to Racism Harlow.

But our protests have won something and that's an important lesson. In particular the recent demonstration following the racist attacks in Stortford—which we linked to the intransigence of the Trust—has had an effect.

Janet Szpakowski
Harlow

Terrible toll of Covid-19 death

ACCORDING TO the official statisticians of the UK administrations, the excess deaths during the pandemic now stand in excess of 65,000.

It is a horrifying and catastrophic figure.

To put it in perspective, throughout the entirety of the Second World War, when Nazi Germany blitzed London, Coventry, Clydebank and other towns and cities across Britain, the civilian death toll was 67,100.

In a period of around four months, Boris Johnson's government, and the devolved administrations of the UK, have allowed Covid-19 to kill almost as many people as the Luftwaffe did in the six years of the war.

Mark Brown
Glasgow

'We are determined to stay on the streets In Portland'

OUR PROTESTS In Portland started with the Minneapolis uprising and have continued every day for well over two months.

The Portland police were very brutal with us, using lots of tear gas and intimidation techniques, which only reminded us of our goal—to dismantle and abolish their forces.

The federal forces have now "disappeared," but we know they're still here or nearby. Nonetheless, we're not being gassed or beaten by feds any longer.

The local Portland Police have resumed that role. I think the general mood is that we are not done fighting and we have to think

of new strategies and targets.

We also have to breathe and rebuild after three long weeks of battling the feds.

It was very heartening to see solidarity protests. It reminds us that the oppression of the US empire extends beyond this city and this country.

For a while, it felt as though the empire was crumbling right above us. It's hard to shake that feeling even now.

I believe Donald Trump saw the persistence of our protests, and how we had successfully limited the police from using one of their tools, and saw this as a challenge to demonstrate that he had control

over us. I think it was both an election year tactic for a supposedly "law and order" president, as well as a personal vendetta. He has always hated Portland as we have protested against him since his election.

Moving forward we need to see a united front of workers, socialists, unemployed, houseless, liberals, and the newly radicalised coming together and putting pressure on government at all levels.

We need to diversify our targets and our tactics. And we need to keep the energy up.

Evan Burchfield
Co-chair, Portland Democratic Socialists of America

'Emergency' virus moves could become permanent

THE LOCKDOWN must have been excellent for all those who are fans of austerity. Libraries, council rubbish tips, playgrounds are all closed.

There will be no day centres for older or disabled people.

Buses are running very irregularly, and are on reduced service.

Many non-urgent operations and hospital treatments are cancelled.

There have been fewer green waste collections and care at home for older or

disabled people has also been reduced.

We will have to watch out—when the virus is no longer so much of a threat—that the Tories don't make a lot of these restrictions permanent.

Yes, pandemics are a costly business, but they will use any excuse to keep public spending to a minimum. Especially as both the virus and spending cuts affect the low paid the worst.

S Burden
Via email

Left must offer an electoral alternative

WE HAVE seen the election of Keir Starmer as Labour leader and the increasing attacks on the Labour left from the new New Labour leadership. As a result there has been talk about the need to relaunch a left electoral challenge to Labour.

This could be a challenge that offers the voters a continued socialist alternative after the demise of Jeremy Corbyn.

I note moves towards relaunching the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition but with a whole generation of new activists.



His supporters are disillusioned

These activists have been inspired by the policies of Corbyn and what he represented.

And I believe now is the time that we, on the left, must look forward to work together and attract the

thousands now left disillusioned by the treatment of Corbyn.

There are many who feel bitter about the abandonment of radical policies and the fake calls of unity used by Starmer to win the leadership of the Labour Party.

We need to be open to creating a new electoral force, similar to previous attempts such as the Socialist Alliance and Left Unity where we bring in new and even broader forces.

Philip Wilson
Chichester

Hunger is Tories' fault

I DON'T understand how anyone can think hunger is not the fault of the Tories.

The Tory ideology is always about prioritising capitalism and the rich.

I recently saw a story about a British woman who died weighing 42lbs, after her benefits were stopped, a benefits system implemented by the Tories.

Do not normalise this shit government.

Suze
On Facebook

WOMEN'S LIVES ARE FORGOTTEN IN PANDEMIC

As schools are forced to close and childcare becomes less available the pressure on women as primary caregivers to children has greatly increased. Sarah Bates looks at why this is and talks to those bearing the brunt of this crisis

THE CLOCK is being rolled back on the lives of millions of working class women, with devastating long-term impacts, warn campaigners and parents.

Women are being pushed into poverty, singled out for redundancy or forced to give up work because of their caring responsibilities.

The full extent of the pressure of lockdown on women's lives is only just beginning to be understood.

Millions of women have been expected to continue to work, either at home or outside it, while at the same time schools have been forced to shut their doors to most pupils and early years childcare was scaled back.

Catherine and her partner Tom have been unable to put their toddler Scarlett in childcare throughout lockdown—yet they've both had to work full time.

"The impact this has had on my family has been huge—I've got friends with multiple children or single parents or who had a baby while in lockdown who are still at home wondering what they can do or can't do. They've been completely forgotten about," Catherine, a teacher living near Rotherham, told Socialist Worker.

She said, "The strain that has been put on parents and families has been forgotten."

"I'm delivering 22 lessons a week online and students are messaging you at all hours. What they're not seeing is I've got a toddler hanging on to my leg."

All this is happening in a context where Catherine argues teachers have been "vilified and demonised" by the press looking to point the blame at why schools aren't operating at full capacity.

"We never shut the school—I was even at work on Easter Monday," she said.

"We've been let down by the politicians but my school has given out food boxes, laptops to students and installed routers in houses that don't have internet."

Early research shows that bosses are more likely to make carers redundant.

The Citizens Advice Bureau warned last week that two in five people with caring responsibilities—either for children or vulnerable adults—face redundancy.

Redundant

The charity warned, "Those in more vulnerable circumstances are likely to bear the brunt," such as retail worker Natalie.

She was made redundant after she was returning from furlough as childcare responsibilities made her unable to work more flexible hours.

"I've been so worried that I could lose my house," she said.

"I've always worked and never been unemployed."

"This is quite a scary scenario. The thought of losing my home scares me. It would destroy me."

This is all a familiar picture to Sarah Ronan, operations manager at Pregnant Then Screwed.

A landmark survey of 19,950 pregnant women and mothers by the maternity rights organisation reveals how livelihoods are being smashed apart by unscrupulous bosses.

It found that during the coronavirus crisis, pregnant women



are being forced to use annual leave, take unpaid leave, or put on statutory sick pay.

But if pregnant women—who are in the medically vulnerable category—can't be kept safe at work, they should be sent home on full pay, not forced to take these measures.

During the lockdown, some 15 percent of mothers have either been made redundant or expect to be made redundant. Of these, 46 percent have said a lack of childcare provision played a role in their redundancy.

And Sarah said that there is a "whole set of wide ranging impacts" from the pandemic that activists are only just now beginning to unpick.

"You've got reduced working hours which is going to increase poverty—we're very concerned about the impact on single parents around that. Really, there's some serious consequences in terms of progress around women's careers."

Almost three quarters of working mothers have had to scale back their working hours to take care of their children.

This means a higher chance of poverty, a greater risk of being pushed out of the workplace entirely and reduced pension contributions.

And it's affecting a huge number of women. Pregnant Then Screwed reported an 800 percent increase to its helpline



SEXIST IDEAS push women into domestic roles

in June, as parents struggled with advice about returning to work, safety in the workplace and flexitime requests.

But it's not just about work. Many mothers are struggling because their social network has been dramatically stripped away from them.

Catherine describes many parents of young children as "constantly panicked" as they struggle to access services that

are a lifeline. "There's still no idea when parents' groups, playgroups or libraries might open up again," she said.

"We rely on these groups for our own wellbeing and sometimes it's about seeing another mum who understands that you've been up four times last night."

She said these services have been largely ignored by the government because, "Rhyme time, or a coffee morning in a church hall doesn't generate enough money for them to see it as valuable."

For all families across Britain, life looks nothing like it did in a pre-Covid world. Early research consistently suggests that women have taken on the vast majority of the extra domestic labour dumped on the laps of families.

Research by University College London found that women spent twice as much time as men on their children's home schooling and development during

lockdown. For mothers of primary age children, they spent on average seven hours each day on home schooling and developmental activity. The average for fathers was just 4 hours.

Sexist

And it's not just children. The Fawcett Society found that women were twice as likely as men to undertake additional caring such as checking on people self-isolating, contacting someone lonely or delivering supplies.

Why the difference between men and women? It's not because of some biological difference.

And it's not because men don't want to look after their children.

Fathers performing less childcare than mothers is structured into the fabric of the working world in a sexist society.

The idea that women's role to be primary care givers is deeply rooted in capitalist society and how the workforce is organised. It means that women are more likely to be paid less and to work part time—and this produces and is reinforced by sexist attitudes.

Sarah argues that the pandemic is "an opportunity to be really honest with ourselves." She called on the government to protect parents legally from redundancies and extend the limit to take bad bosses to tribunals.

"We have been fed lip service policies, such as dads getting a couple of weeks of paternity leave. But employers have had decades to do the right thing and they've not done it," she said.

"Parents are struggling to keep their heads above water. It's like the government just assumes that women will pay the price, suck it up and take the burden."



Women are being made redundant at an unprecedented rate



Closed nurseries and playgroups mean more pressure on women

Cracks in childcare system have been exposed in the crisis

COVID-19 HAS exploded the British childcare crisis that has simmered for decades. More and more parents are being told by the government and bosses to go back to work, but with no extra childcare support.

Boris Johnson pushed for more workplaces to reopen their doors from 1 August—in the middle of the school holidays—but with only a much reduced number of childcare places available.

Only a tiny fraction of holiday clubs are running throughout the holidays, partly because of confusing government guidance.

Government advice issued in July said clubs should only have consistent groups of up to 15 children. This was later relaxed, but many providers weren't planning on setting up clubs for the school holidays.

And for some parents, childminders are too expensive for the holidays. Travel agent Gemma says that local childminders have doubled the cost of care.

"I'm only on minimum wage anyway, so if and when I do go back to work and I have to start using a more expensive childminder it's probably pointless me going to work for the day," she said.

And industry experts are warning that further childcare crises are down the line.

A survey of childminders and nurseries revealed that one in four think they will be shut permanently within a year.

Sarah blasted the government's promise of £660 million for the sector which she says "doesn't even touch the sides."

"If the government want childcare to bounce back then they need to treat childcare like the infrastructure it is."

Transport for London quite rightly received a government bailout.

"But it needs to treat childcare like the infrastructure it is—if you're a working parent you need childcare."

It's a deeply underfunded sector, relying on private companies to

deliver care—but many are operating on slim margins.

Many childcare workers—of which 96 percent are women—are scraping by on poverty wages.

The Social Mobility Commission report revealed last week that one in eight childcare workers earn less than £5 an hour.

It warned that poor pay—the average wage in the sector is just £7.42 an hour—was leading to an increasingly insecure sector, with a high staff turnover.

Sarah said the way the childcare sector is structured is "a house of cards."

"Childcare is capitalism 101—it's leveraging the economic needs of one group of women against another group of women," she said.

"The childcare sector is the arena where all this happens."

Sarah is hopeful that the coronavirus crisis—and the resulting childcare catastrophe—has created new opportunities for change.

Facilities

"The conversation is more mainstream now," she said. "The real danger of an issue like childcare is it gets seen as a women's issue."

It is possible for the government to provide huge levels of public support for childcare facilities at a time of national crisis.

Before the Second World War, there were barely any state-provided childcare options for working mothers.

But the need for women to enter the workforce changed that.

The government pushed through a huge expansion into day nurseries, allowing women to place their children there at a subsidised cost.

At some nurseries, clothes were supplied and laundered by the nursery and fed children three meals a day.

A similar project in Britain today would ease the burden of childrearing on women and allow them to re-enter the workforce after the pandemic has blown it apart.

Read the Pregnant Then Screwed report here bit.ly/redundantmothers



WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



Why are the police so racist?

BRADFORD

Thu 20 Aug,
7pm
885 9187 7552

KENT

Thu 20 Aug,
8.15pm
434-623-8064

LONDON:

HACKNEY
Thu 20 Aug, 7.30pm
798-534-2585

NEWCASTLE

Wed 19 Aug,
7pm
368-595-2712

SOCIALIST WORKER
ONLINE MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BIRMINGHAM

What is institutional racism?
Wed 19 Aug, 7pm
281-634-5938

BLACK COUNTRY

Climate catastrophe and Covid-19—no return to the capitalist 'normal'
Wed 19 Aug, 8pm
352-891-2411

BOLTON & WIGAN

Social insecurity—how the Tories are wrecking the NHS
Thu 20 Aug,
6.30pm
872-5136-9540

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Why did Obama fail?
Thu 20 Aug,
6.30pm
818-1857-1448

BURNLEY & PENDLE

What kind of health service do we need?
Wed 19 Aug, 7.30pm
446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE

Another education is possible
Thu 20 Aug,
7.30pm
681-800-4408

CHELMSFORD

& SOUTHERN
Covid, capitalism and economic crisis
Wed 19 Aug, 7pm
836-7833-8366

CHESTERFIELD

The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx
Thu 20 Aug,
6.30pm
829-532-8731

COVENTRY

Decolonising education—the legacy of empire
Wed 19 Aug,
7.30pm
823-945-1917

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

By any means necessary—the revolutionary legacy of Malcolm X
Wed 19 Aug, 7.30pm
396-573-1805

EDINBURGH

Covid-19 and the fightback in the workplaces
Wed 19 Aug,
7.30pm
431-459-112

EXETER

What do we mean by democracy?
Wed 19 Aug, 7pm
865-2972-2883

GLASGOW

75 Years after Hiroshima—why we must scrap Trident
Thu 20 Aug, 6.30pm
851-5254-7239

HARLOW

What do we mean by revolution and why do we need one?
Thu 27 Aug,
7.30pm
832-8746-7480

HUDDERSFIELD

All the statues should fall—confronting the legacy of slavery and empire
Thu 20 Aug,
6.30pm
290-168-1804

LANCASTER & MORECAMBE

Is another education possible?
Thu 20 Aug,
6.30pm
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New stand-up show already feels like outdated humour

Sam Jay's new Netflix special *3 In The Morning* is refreshing in some ways. But there are too many jokes that leave you cold, says **Jasmine Fischer**

IT'S ALWAYS refreshing to see a Netflix comedy special where the comedian isn't yet another white man making similar jokes to most successful white comedians.

I've done stand-up comedy at open mics on and off for the last nine years. I can safely say I'm sick of watching white men talk about their genitals or porn, or making sexist jokes about their girlfriend or wife.

So it's welcome to see a black, gay woman from a working class background on the stage.

Sam Jay has some great jokes, including one about Elon Musk going into space. It's a comment on how rich white men have got a blind confidence and can do whatever they want.

But there are some very uncomfortable moments as well, and some reactionary jokes that seem to fit with a certain type of identity politics.

Some jokes feature hurtful



Sam Jay

stereotypes about trans women. There's a transphobic routine about how we need trans women to fight for us, and how it's the only way to get women into male sports.

Jokes like this about different oppressed groups are littered throughout the set.

One of the worst ones is about the #MeToo movement and how she supported it until it got too white and attacked comedian Aziz Ansari.

Jay asks how it's possible for Ansari to assault anyone as it would be easy to fight him off because he's not a big guy. She follows it up with a bigoted joke about how no one has said they've felt unable to fight an Indian man.

It's clear she thinks because of her identity as a black, gay, woman she is able to make racist, sexist, or transphobic jokes.

But actually it's just divisive. Whoever it comes from, encouraging racist or sexist stereotypes and defending sexism only further enables oppression.

Some of Jay's jokes are funny. But overall her set felt very outdated, particularly in the context of a Black Lives Matter movement that is uniting the oppressed.

3 In The Morning is on Netflix now



AFUA HIRSCH (right) with Ethiopian artist Eshetu Tirenih and his painting *Victims of Famine*

African culture and politics interweave

DOCUMENTARY

AFRICAN RENAISSANCE—WHEN ART MEETS POWER

BBC4

Monday 17, 24 and 31 August, 9pm

AFUA HIRSCH, author of *Brit(ish)*, explores Ethiopia, Senegal and Kenya looking at their history, art, music and culture in a three-part series.

It's refreshing to watch a programme that celebrates African achievement as well as the horrors of its history.

The first programme is on Ethiopia. It shows the

extraordinary civilisation of Axum that emerged in northern Ethiopia around the 4th century BC and was a highpoint of world development for hundreds of years. Hirsch rightly stresses the importance of Ethiopia resisting colonisation through the defeat of the Italians at the Battle of Adwa in 1896.

She also puts forward a sophisticated history of the rise of Ras Tafari—Haile Selassie.

Hirsch documents how under him Ethiopia became a "symbol of African defiance" but that he was far from being a beacon of progressive change

for ordinary people. Throughout the programme, the history is interwoven with the country's art and culture. This works well and, for example, shows the transformation under the Stalinist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in the 1970s.

Ethiopia is one of Africa's most diverse societies with a rich cultural heritage and you will discover some of it from the programme. Hirsch is far too complimentary about the present Ethiopian government, but that aside this is a very promising beginning to the series.

Charlie Kimber

FILM

APOCALYPSE NOW—FINAL CUT

Available now on BBC IPlayer

THE FINAL cut of *Apocalypse Now* is available to stream on BBC Iplayer.

In 1970, Captain Willard in Saigon is given a secret mission by the top brass. He must travel the perilous river route through war-torn South Vietnam into neighbouring Cambodia to "terminate" a decorated US colonel who has gone rogue.

Regularly voted one of the greatest films ever made, *Apocalypse Now* is based on Joseph Conrad's literary classic *Heart of Darkness*.

Many people will already know some of its most famous scenes, including the destruction of a Vietnamese village by the terrifying colonel Kilgore.

The final cut also features scenes from the even longer "redux" version in which Willard encounters a house of old French colonialists. Scenes in which Willard's crew trade oil drums for sex have, thankfully, been cut.

DOCUDRAMA

FRANTZ FANON—BLACK SKIN WHITE MASK

Available to stream from £3.50 at player.bfi.org.uk

FRANTZ FANON—*Black Skin White Mask* tells the story of the life and work of the highly influential anti-colonialist writer Frantz Fanon.

It uses reconstructions, archive footage and



Colin Salmon as Frantz Fanon

interviews with major theorists and writers, and stars Colin Salmon as Fanon.

Artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien and curator and producer Mark Nash undertake an exploration of Fanon's life, influence and legacy.

It takes us from his early years in Martinique—then a colony of France—to his professional life as a psychiatric doctor.

And it looks at his legacy as a revolutionary in Algeria during the bloody war of independence with France.

The film is now available to rent for streaming at BFI player.

PEOPLE in Lebanon rightly draw a line from the devastating explosion in the capital city Beirut to the rule of a corrupt elite.

The explosion encapsulates a rotten political system in crisis. The vast majority of ordinary people in Lebanon are suffering because of the hostility and indifference of those at the top.

Even before the explosion hit, Lebanon was plunging deep into an economic crash.

Up to 60 percent of its population was expected to be in poverty by the end of this year.

Lebanon's ruling parties hoped to resolve their crisis with more of the punishing austerity and free market policies that impoverished so many in the first place.

And though a mass movement forced the resignation of former prime minister Saad Hariri last year, and waves of protests continued, the system has so far remained intact.

Many of the protesters associate Lebanon's confessional political system—where positions in government are handed out on the basis of religious sect—with corruption. They rightly want rid of it.

But it's sickening to see governments of countries that helped to form, prop up and benefit from that system now claiming to oppose it.

Toured

When French president Emmanuel Macron toured Beirut last week, he made sure he was filmed telling protesters the aid he promised “will not go to corrupt hands”.

He demanded reforms and a new “political pact,” promising to return on 1 September to “take my political responsibility” if this doesn't happen.

Why does the French president feel such “political responsibility” for Lebanon?

Because France played a major role in setting up Lebanon's system in the first place and then propping it up over decades.

When the victorious imperial powers carved up the Middle East after the First World War, France wrangled Syria and Lebanon for itself.

By that time French capitalists had already turned Lebanon's developing economy almost entirely towards silk production for export to France.

Maronite Christians, who lived in the mountains where Lebanon's silk factories were based, came to dominate Lebanon's capitalist class.

So the French colonial rulers imposed a political system that divided positions on a religious basis.

This ensured the political dominance of the Maronite capitalists and aimed to divide ordinary people—Christians,



Devastation in Beirut after the blast in the Lebanese capital last week

LEBANON LEGACIES OF EMPIRE

The devastating blast in Beirut highlighted Lebanon's rotten political system. This sectarian set-up was built by Western imperialism, writes Nick Clark



Hypocrite—France's Emmanuel Macron

Muslims and Druze even after France left. Independence was formally declared in 1943.

But just days before, France arrested Lebanese president Bishara al-Khuri and virtually his entire government for trying to pass laws undermining its influence.

French soldiers stayed in Lebanon for another three years.

And even after they finally left in 1946, Western imperialist powers used military force to make sure Lebanon had the



France imposed a political system with positions based on religion

political system they wanted. In 1958 a new movement demanded that Lebanon join with the Arab nationalist governments of Egypt and Syria that challenged US control of the Middle East.

In response the US sent some 14,000 troops to prop up the Western-backed government.

It was a foretaste of what was to come some 17 years later, when resistance against Lebanon's rulers combined with the Palestinian liberation

struggle. Palestinian refugees were another poor and politically marginalised section of Lebanon's population.

Tens of thousands of them had fled to Lebanon after being expelled from Palestine when Israel was created in 1948 (see right).

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) organised among them and from 1971 used Lebanon as a base for guerrilla struggle against Israel to the south.

They had a common cause with the secular nationalists and left wing groups that organised among the poorest sections of Lebanese people.

Fighting between the PLO and the Christian fascist Phalange party erupted into civil war in 1975. The alliance between the PLO and the left posed an existential challenge to the Lebanese political system.

They were beaten when competing states intervened to rescue it.

THE Syrian regime of Hafez al-Assad, which wanted to control the Palestinian resistance, was encouraged by the US to invade.

Syrian soldiers defeated the left, pushed the Palestinians back into refugee camps and occupied a big chunk of west and north Lebanon.

Then in 1978 and 1982 Israel invaded to try and crush the PLO. Its 1982 invasion culminated in horrific massacres in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps.

Israeli soldiers surrounded the camps and prevented anyone from leaving.

Then, with Israeli coordination, Phalange militias entered and began killing indiscriminately. They murdered as many as 3,500 Palestinians.

Israel occupied southern Lebanon. In these conditions, the militant movement Hizbollah was founded and became the focus of resistance to the Israeli occupation.

It was based mainly among Lebanon's Shia Muslim minority, carved out and particularly impoverished by the sectarian system.

But its successes in fighting the Israeli occupation gave it much wider support. Israel ended the occupation in 2000.

Hizbollah is more than just a militia. It even runs its own schools, hospitals, clinics and education programmes.

But rather than challenge the basis of the political system in Lebanon, it wants to fit into it, and relies on backing from Syria and Iran.

Again, Western powers have interfered to keep Lebanon under their control. In 2005 for example they backed the “Cedar Revolution”—a series of demonstrations against the Syrian occupation.

This was led by right wing parties backed by the West.

Syria ended the occupation in 2005 and the US hoped it was a sign that it could turn the tide against Hizbollah.

But there were also mass demonstrations against US interference that went far beyond support for Hizbollah. Lebanese revolutionary socialist Bassem Chit, reporting from Beirut for Socialist Worker in 2005, quoted one young demonstrator Maher.

“I agree that Syrian troops should leave the country, but I don't want them to be replaced by US troops.

“The Israelis are the biggest terrorists in the region. I want Syrian troops to leave the country, but I don't want there to be a racist war against the Syrians, the Palestinians, or other Lebanese communities.

“I don't agree with everything Hizbollah says, but I feel I need to have my voice heard.”

Demonstrations also turned against the free market policies of the Western-backed government that enriched a few but left many impoverished.

Hizbollah increased its representation in the Lebanese parliament in 2005 elections and for the first time joined the government.

ISRAEL INVADED Lebanon once again in 2006, this time hoping to crush Hizbollah. Its plan involved widespread destruction of Lebanese civilian buildings and infrastructure.

But it failed. The widespread support for Hizbollah's resistance to Israel, which went far beyond the Shia population, and solidarity among Lebanese people across religious lines, gave Israel its first humiliating defeat.

Hizbollah had mass support. But it was caught in a contradiction. On one hand it had the support of people who suffered at the hands of imperialism and Lebanon's political system.

But its increasing role in the government, and its reliance on Syria and Iran, meant it would turn against mass movements.

As revolutions swept the Middle East in 2010 and 2011, Hizbollah fought on the side of the Syrian regime's counter revolution.

And as ordinary Lebanese people united against the government and corruption in last year's mass movement, Hizbollah thugs attacked their demonstrations.

Ultimately Hizbollah became part of the system it was a reaction against. Corruption



ISRAELI forces devastated Beirut in 2006 (top) Recent protests showed the power to overcome sectarian division (above)

isn't unique to Lebanon—and sectarianism doesn't run as deep as those who rely on it would like to claim.

Time and again ordinary people have united across religious divides to challenge that system.

This sort of unity comes through struggles from below.

We saw it in the movement that took to the streets last year. People demanded an entirely new political system.

Popular chants included, “Revolution,” and, “All of them means all of them”—meaning they wanted to get rid of all the corrupt elites across sectarian divides.

Taking on that corruption doesn't just mean ending sectarianism—it means challenging the system and the imperialist powers who rely on it.

READ MORE

● **A new cycle of revolt** by Joseph Choonara in the International Socialism journal bit.ly/GlobalRevolt

● **Hizbollah and the war Israel lost** by Chris Harman in the International Socialism journal bit.ly/HarmanHizbollah

● **Selected writings of Bassem Chit** Available at the Marxist Internet Archive bit.ly/BassemChit

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Israeli state is worried about questioning of its history

As Seth Rogen talks about Israel's lies, Tomáš Tengely-Evans looks at the myths around the foundation of the state



ACTOR SETH Rogen was right to say there were Palestinian people in what became Israel in 1948

ALL IT took was one comment from actor Seth Rogen for one of Israel's leading politicians to spring into action.

Rogen said on a podcast that “as a Jewish person I was fed a huge amount of lies about Israel”. Referring to the Israeli state's founding in 1948, he added, “They never tell you that, ‘Oh by the way, there were people there’.”

Shortly afterwards Isaac Herzog tweeted that Rogen had apologised for his comments—a claim the actor denies.

Herzog is an Israeli Labour politician and chairperson of the Jewish Agency, set up in 1929 to promote Zionism among Jewish people and colonisation in Palestine.

This fragility in the face of criticism shows the Israeli state is worried about the worldwide outcry against its oppression of the Palestinians.

In the US, in particular, Israel is facing a crisis of support among left wingers and liberals, including many younger Jewish people.

Annexation

There is opposition to Binyamin Netanyahu's right wing government, such as its annexation of Palestinian land and embrace of Donald Trump and Europe's far right.

But it also includes a questioning of Israel's founding ideology of Zionism. This response to antisemitism in Europe argues for an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine, and justifies Palestinian dispossession and oppression.

One poll in San Francisco's Bay Area found that only 40 percent of Jews aged 18 to 34 were comfortable with the idea of a Jewish state.

Rogen is by no means an anti-Zionist. But what he said questioned one of Zionism's main myths—the claim that Palestine was “a land without a people for a people without

a land”. Israel's was built on the ethnic cleansing of more than 800,000 Palestinians, a process known as the “Nakba” or catastrophe.

Paramilitary forces that went on to become the Israeli army drove Palestinians from villages and towns through massacres and terror.

Since its foundation, Israel has grabbed more Palestinian land and brought more Palestinians under its rule.

In 1948 Israeli forces conquered land beyond what was stipulated in the UN partition plan for the British-ruled Mandate of Palestine. Then in 1967 Israel captured East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

But Israeli politicians are obsessed with maintaining a demographic majority. Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion said, “Only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state.”

So what happens to the Palestinians under its rule? Since the 1993 Oslo Accords, US and Israeli leaders have talked of a “viable Palestinian state” alongside Israel. But throughout this time Israel

further cemented its control in the Occupied Territories.

Today more than 600,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, their vast settlements connected to Israel with exclusive roads.

And some 3 million Palestinians live as Israeli subjects while the Palestinian Authority acts as a subcontractor for the occupation.

further cemented its control in the Occupied Territories.

Today more than 600,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, their vast settlements connected to Israel with exclusive roads.

And some 3 million Palestinians live as Israeli subjects while the Palestinian Authority acts as a subcontractor for the occupation.

Solution

The idea that the US—which supports Israel to safeguard its interests in the Middle East—would deliver a two-state solution was always a sham.

But Donald Trump's “peace deal” has further exposed this.

It would make formal the apartheid that Palestinians already live under.

This situation isn't just down to the policies of the Netanyahu government. Occupation and apartheid flow from the logic of the settler colonial project.

One state is inevitable. The question is whether it will be the Israeli apartheid state or a democratic state with equal rights for Palestinians and Jews.

Herzog's reaction shows how concerned the Israeli government is about the sense of unease about its foundations and actions.

As more people question Israeli occupation, it's time for the left to stand up and make the argument.

Winning liberation means supporting the Palestinian struggle against colonialism and apartheid.



One state is inevitable. The choice is apartheid or democracy

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

'What we gonna start saying is Black Power'

by YURI PRASAD

"THERE WERE two or three years there, where the movement went a little too far toward Stokely," said former US president Bill Clinton last month. He was discussing the 1960s battle for Civil Rights at John Lewis's funeral.

It's right that American presidents should fear the name Stokely Carmichael.

The tireless young leader of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was a popular and radical figure in the movement for black liberation.

Agitation

The son of a steam ship steward and a carpenter from Trinidad, Carmichael arrived in New York at the age of 11 and soon after began a life of agitation against racism.

As a teenager he set about organising boycotts of restaurants that wouldn't serve black people, and then speaking about his progress at church on Sundays.

In 1961, while studying philosophy at university, he



STOKELY CARMICHAEL in 1966

joined the Freedom Rides that aimed to desegregate inter-state travel.

Aged just 19, he spent 53 days in a tiny jail cell after an attempt to desegregate a train station cafe.

Carmichael's reputation

got him a job as full time organiser for the SNCC in Mississippi where he coordinated voter registration drives in probably the most dangerous part of the US.

Black people there were disenfranchised by all manner

of local laws upheld not only by trigger-happy racist cops, but also the Ku Klux Klan.

Scores of activists, black and white, had been killed, tortured or injured in the battle for voting rights and Stokely wasn't about to join

them. Together with others he formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organisation, a political party that used a black panther as its symbol, and was prepared to use arms to defend itself.

All this drove his reputation within the movement still further. But it was a march he organised in 1966 that was to catapult him on the national stage.

Marching

Carmichael emerged from jail after being arrested for marching and made a famous speech.

He said, "This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested. I ain't going to jail no more. What we gonna start saying now is 'Black Power'."

The slogan had an immediate affect and was soon echoing among young radicals.

It was ambiguous but powerful.

In Carmichael's hands it became first a rejection of white liberalism, and later a rejection of white people's participation in the movement.

He also opposed black women's demands to tackle sexism in the movement.

In 1964 he said, "The only position for women in SNCC is prone."

In the late 60s, the fight against racism increasingly fused with opposition to the Vietnam War. Carmichael seemed to be an ever-growing threat to the establishment—especially after he joined the Black Panther Party.

The FBI was obsessed with the idea of a radical "black messiah" and targeted him with death threats.

Along with many other black leaders, Carmichael went into exile in Africa.

He changed his name to Kwame Ture and embraced a version of Pan-Africanist politics.

His time as a potent threat to the US establishment was short.

But Clinton was right to imply that for a few years Carmichael, and everything he stood for, posed a radical threat to the system.

This is part of a series about radical black lives Go to bit.ly/SWBlackLives

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Blame poverty and racism for high deaths from virus

Right wingers claim biology is behind the disproportionate deaths of black people from coronavirus. A new report destroys this myth, reports Yuri Prasad

EARLY in Britain's Covid-19 crisis, when figures revealed that black people were dying at a disproportional rate, right wingers rushed to explain this as a biological trait. It was proof, they said, of inherent racial differences.

The latest report from the Runnymede Trust debunks such myth making.

It shows that black people are more likely to catch coronavirus than they should be. And it details how social and economic factors mean that they face greater barriers to protect themselves.

Through detailed statistics and surveys, the report shows that black people are over-represented in key worker roles and have had fewer opportunities to work from home.

They've also had to use public transport more and are less likely to have been given adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Crowded

It also shows that black people are more likely to be living in overcrowded households.

The trust concludes that black people are "more likely to be over-exposed and under-protected compared with their white British counterparts".

Some of the examples in the report are stark. Some 15 percent of black people say they personally knew someone who died with the virus. This figure rises to 19 percent for people of African-Caribbean backgrounds. The number of white British people is less than 10 percent.

While some 23 percent of white British people classify themselves as key workers, around

38 percent of those from a black African background do.

And, when gender is taken into account, the disparity rises further still. Some 43 percent of Bangladeshi women workers are in key worker roles.

But occupation alone does not explain why black people have been disproportionately at risk in comparison with their white counterparts.

The report shows that some 21 percent of white British workers said they were not given adequate PPE, and that 13 percent were given tasks which may have exposed them to the virus.

But 42 percent of those from a Pakistani background say they had inadequate PPE, and 20 percent were given dangerous tasks.

The trust makes a number of key recommendations.

One of these is that employers should be made to carry out risk assessments for workers with vulnerable characteristics—including those from black and Asian backgrounds.

This ought to form a bedrock of the trade union response to the reopening of workplaces.

It also says the government's Find, Test, Trace, Isolate and Support programme needs to be specifically tailored to ensure that black communities are identified and supported.

This crucial demand is already being taken up by some local authorities as evidence of the complete failure of the government programme becomes clear.

Ensuring vital health messages reach those most at risk ought to have been built into the system from the start.

The full report is available to download at bit.ly/Runnymedereport



STAND UP To Racism is demanding an inquiry into black deaths from coronavirus

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Racist housing policies behind overcrowded homes

Overcrowded housing is a common factor in many of the recent local lockdowns.

Having a large family in too small a property exposes people to greater risk.

The report shows that "Black and minority ethnic households are, on average, larger than white British households."

And it says that they are also "more likely than white people to live with someone (including children) who may be vulnerable to coronavirus due to a disability or

health condition". Much of the reporting of the lockdown in the north of England has focused on Asian families living in multi-generational households.

But the spread of the virus from younger people, who are going out from their home, to older relatives, who generally aren't, cannot be reduced to patterns of housing.

It is entirely possible to live in a safe multi-generational household. And after the disaster of Covid-19 in care homes it's clear that



A room where six people live

under this government the alternatives are not always safe.

Having many separate bathrooms and living areas is important. This can ensure that more vulnerable members of the family can more effectively shield themselves from those more at risk.

The obstacles are money and prejudice. The types of social housing that are available generally cannot facilitate larger families.

And decades of racist housing policies have locked many Asians into the poorest areas.



Home working was denied

BLACK AND Asian people are less likely to have been given the option of working at home during the height of the pandemic—and so were at much greater risk.

The report says, "A third of black and minority ethnic people are in this position, compared to close to a quarter of white people. People of African origin are particularly likely to be working outside of their home—41 percent."



A greater loss of incomes

WHILE 22 percent of white people reported a loss of income since Covid-19 this rises to 43 percent of Bangladeshis and 38 percent of Black Africans.

More than three times as many people from a black and minority ethnic background have had to start skipping meals as white people.



Racist attacks up during virus

ALMOST two out of ten black African respondents said they had been a "victim of a racially motivated attack" since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis.

One in ten Pakistani and Chinese people had also faced either verbal or physical attack.

Downgrade scandal hit the poorest hardest

Grades in vital qualifications are being determined by corporate algorithms, not teacher assessments

SCHOOL STUDENTS protested in Glasgow last Friday chanting “no classist SQA” and “what do we want? Fair grades”.

They are angry because Scottish teachers’ judgements about pupils’ exam grades have been overruled, and there’s a strong element of class inequality built into the process.

Last week the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) published finalised grades for this year’s exams.

Much to the dismay of many students, families and teachers, the SQA altered teachers’ predicted grades in over 130,000 cases—nearly 25 percent of all students.

Teachers’ estimates were lowered by the private, for-profit organisation with a monopoly Scottish Government contract to set the curriculum.

To make matters much worse, students from lower income areas had their grades lowered by more than students from more wealthy areas.

Income

In Higher exams, for example, the number of pupils from lowest income area schools who passed was reduced by 15.2 percent. But schools in the wealthiest areas saw a drop of just 6.9 percent.

The SQA lowered pupils’ grades more in lower income area schools based on the past performance of the school, not the individual student.

The message is clear—the SQA doesn’t believe that “pupils from places like that” can get good grades.

School student Erin Bleakley, who organised Friday’s protest, said, “We deserve the same life chances as young people in affluent areas.

“How can anyone expect to close the attainment gap when your hard work can be wiped out based on your postcode?”

One pupil from a deprived area, who was expected to get As but has ended up with Cs and Ds, told

BACK STORY

Thousands of Scottish school pupils had their exam grades lowered when a education firm decided teachers’ predictions counted for nothing

● Pupils in rich areas were favoured by the decision

● Students have been told they’ve failed exams they never had a chance to sit

● The practice will be extended to England and Wales

Channel 4, “Somehow I’ve failed an exam I didn’t sit.”

Disgracefully the Scottish government has defended the process. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said, “I would love to be in the position of standing here credibly saying that 85 percent of the 20 percent of pupils in the most deprived areas had passed Higher.

“But given that it was 65 percent last year, that would raise a real credibility issue.”

The 2019-20 school year was already anything but normal or easy for students and their families.

They had to adapt and try to cope with a global pandemic, rapidly rising death tolls and looming economic catastrophe.

Adequate

During all this chaos pupils tried to continue to learn online from home, often without adequate work space, Wi-Fi or access to computers.

Meanwhile teachers spent three months supporting learners by developing, delivering and evaluating online learning for their classes.

Some teachers were also staffing hubs to support the children of frontline workers.

Scottish teachers were not surprised to see the SQA cancel the national qualification exams for the first time ever.

Teachers then gathered together preliminary exam and other test



PROTESTING IN Glasgow last Friday

results as well as pupil course work. That evidence was combined with teacher judgements about the performance and progress of each individual student to come up with a predicted grade estimate.

The predicted grades were then reviewed at the level of the department and the school.

This process involved a huge amount of careful thought for each pupil and was led by teachers who had been working with the pupil at least since August 2019.

The predicted grades were submitted to the SQA for a final round of national moderation. Exams are never a satisfactory way

to assess a pupil’s learning but the SQA has managed to maintain the attainment gap without anyone taking exams. Some achievement.

To really tackle the attainment gap we need investment in schools, smaller class sizes, proper provision for students whose first language is not English, and money for additional needs.

Crucially there has to be a reversal of the cuts in public spending during the years of austerity.

This scandal underlines the failings of an education system based on tests, grades and sorting people into boxes in the interests of big business.

● **TEACHER-assessed grades have not been used to calculate the “vast majority” of GCSE results that students in England in Wales will receive later this month.**

The same is likely to be true of A-level results.

One exam board said that around 60 percent of grades will be based purely on “statistical modelling”—taking account of the school’s past performance.

The government’s Ofqual quango has insisted on the rule despite head teachers describing it as “bewildering”.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Manchester postal workers in danger

A MANCHESTER postal worker has said staff are being put at risk after 15 people working in a sorting office have tested positive for Covid-19.

The Royal Mail centre on Oldham Road has remained open for business, despite a number of staff contracting the virus in the last week.

A member of staff, who wished to remain anonymous, said he had not been told to self-isolate, even though he had been in direct contact with those infected.

He said some workers had been contacted by the

government’s track and trace system, but other members of staff had not.

The worker told the Manchester Evening News that when he asked a manager about whether he should isolate, he was told he could, but that he would not be paid.

The worker says staff were informed when a colleague tested positive for the virus, but only some people have been told to self-isolate.

“We have been told we will only get sent home if we are contacted by the track and trace system.

“Some members of staff have had calls but a lot of the time there have been people like myself who have spent more time with that infected person, than the ones that have been told to go home.”

He added, “Some people are coming from shielding after living like prisoners for months, only for all this to kick off.

“They have been told they have to come in or they don’t get paid and so they are frightened to death. Something needs doing about it.”

Trade unions should call immediate action in such cases.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Back new action in Tower Hamlets fight

by SARAH BATES

A THREE-DAY strike was set to hit Tower Hamlets council this week, with workers planning to walk out to defend terms and conditions.

Up to 1,500 workers in the east London borough planned to strike on Thursday and Friday this week and Monday next week.

The Unison union members are battling "Tower Rewards"—a new contract, imposed on 6 July, that smashes up workers' conditions.

It attacks workers' severance pay, travel allowance, pay scales and flexitime agreements.

And it's been viciously imposed by a Labour council led by mayor John Biggs.

Unison union leader Dave Prentis wrote directly to Biggs last week demanding that he call off the attacks and sit down with reps to negotiate.

Yet John McLoughlin, Tower Hamlets Unison branch secretary, told Socialist Worker that council bosses didn't seem to be budging. "They have used the period of the pandemic



ON THE picket line in July

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

to run down the clock on us," he said.

Workers suspended planned strikes in March because they wanted to deliver essential services during the pandemic.

Because of the Tory anti-union laws, their strike ballot runs out on 20 August.

So management are using the delay as an opportunity to block further action.

John said organising a strike when many union members

were working from home meant it was "hard to gauge."

"We had a meeting last week, there were 140 people there. The people we're in contact with are very positive."

Strikers are planning to hold a series of workplace pickets throughout the borough and organise a big online rally this week.

They're also considering holding a socially-distanced protest down Whitechapel

Road to the council's new headquarters, which are due to be opened in 2022.

John said that workers' fears about the drive to slash redundancy pay appear to be well-founded. Bosses are already making noises about job cuts.

It's likely that Unison will re-ballot its members to give them another opportunity to take further action.

For the latest strike news go to towerhamlets.unison.site/news/

CIVIL SERVICE



Workers protesting at London's Tate Modern in July PICTURE: FLOYD CODLIN

Strikes called at Tate after bosses cut hundreds of jobs

OVER 100 workers at the Tate galleries in London are set to strike next week over job cuts.

PCS union members plan to walk out on Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19, Friday 21 and Saturday 22 August.

They are fighting around 200 redundancies.

In a ballot workers voted 88 percent Yes for strikes on a 79 percent turnout.

Tate Commerce, which says, "Our role is to maximise profits," operates retail, catering and publishing services across the four galleries in London, Liverpool and St Ives.

It notified staff in mid-June of restructuring plans aimed at cutting £1 million.

Despite these cuts, the Tate has confirmed that it has requested an additional 18 staff, from its contractor Securitas, to cover the Steve McQueen exhibition. The union says, "While the Tate says these are only 'short-term roles' this

will come as little comfort to those staff who are imminently facing the axe.

"The redundancies are unnecessary.

"We are asking for just 10 percent of the expected government bailout of the gallery to save hundreds of jobs.

"If the financial situation at the gallery is so dire, why are their senior executives still earning eye watering salaries way over £100,000?"

Join post-picket protests from 11.30am on 18 and 22 August at Tate Modern and 21 August at Tate Britain.

Donate to the strike fund at bit.ly/TateStrike

THE PCS union launched a consultative ballot on Monday of its Southbank Centre members in London.

The employer has confirmed it will not pay its normal redundancy terms, meaning hundreds of staff will lose out on thousands of pounds.

UNISON UNION

Back Paul Holmes for Unison union leader

by JANET MAIDEN and TONY PHILLIPS (Unison union activists in a personal capacity)

SUPPORT IS growing for Paul Holmes to be the next Unison union general secretary.

Nominations for the post opened this week.

The election comes with the Tories in trouble over their mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic and with a growing economic crisis.

Workers are increasingly angry at the attacks we are facing. This is clearly shown by the inspiring Black Lives Matter movement and the revolt by health workers over pay in recent weeks.

The present leadership of the union has failed to reflect the bitterness of members and lead an effective fightback.

Despite a rise in membership during the pandemic, the number of union activists is shrinking. Disgracefully, some



Paul Holmes

Unison officials have told local branches not to support the NHS pay demos.

Two senior officials are standing for general secretary. Christina McAnea is a clear continuity candidate with the 20 years of Dave Prentis' rule.

Roger McKenzie, the most senior black official in the union, is touted as a left candidate. But it is hard to see to see how someone who has been at the heart of the union machine throughout the last decade represents real change. A

third Unison-employed candidate is equalities officer Margaret Greer.

None of these offer real change

Paul Holmes has secured the support of many union members because of his outstanding record as branch secretary of Kirklees Unison and on both the national executive and the local government executive.

A socialist and Labour Party member, Paul has shown in deeds not words a fighting, organising approach. He has led disputes and built one of the strongest branches in Unison. He has tackled racism directly by, for example, organising strikes by bin workers to challenge racist bullying.

Action such as protests and strikes is crucial.

But a strong campaign for Paul will help to build the fighting union we need.

For updates on the campaign go to bit.ly/UnisonAction

UNIVERSITIES

Solidarity for cuts struggle

UCU UNION activists planned protests and rallies on Thursday this week against mass job cuts and the gutting of education.

One focus for the day was showing solidarity with UCU and Unison union members at Soas in central London who are balloting for strikes to oppose redundancies.

Socially-distanced physical protests were planned at Heriot-Watt (Edinburgh), Liverpool university and Soas from 12.15pm with an online rally starting at 12.30pm.

University bosses across Britain are planning a jobs massacre.

But UCU members recently showed their willingness to resist by rejecting a deal to end their "Four Fights" dispute.

Solidarity with those fighting back is essential.

To register for the online rally go to bit.ly/Unis13Aug Speakers include activists leading the fightback and John McDonnell MP

JOURNALISM

Journalists in fightback

WORKERS IN the NUJ union at Bullivant Media Limited in the West Midlands are preparing for strikes.

The dispute is over unauthorised deductions of salaries, compulsory redundancies and recently imposed working practices.

This includes non-editorial staff taking over many editorial functions.

The chapel (union branch) said the company has informed five of the 18 members of the editorial staff they face compulsory redundancy within days.

Titles that could be affected include the Coventry Observer, Leamington Observer, Rugby Observer, Stratford Observer, Solihull Observer, Redditch Standard, Bromsgrove Standard, Worcester Observer and Evesham Observer.

In a ballot workers had earlier voted 100 percent for strikes.

Action is planned later this month.

TELECOM

Will BT see resistance?

BT WORKERS are preparing for a major struggle over jobs and conditions.

Their CWU union says it could call a major strike unless bosses retreat.

Andy Kerr, CWU deputy general secretary (Telecoms), has slammed BT's plans for compulsory redundancies. He said this would include some of the key workers that have helped keep Britain connected during the pandemic.

"Put yourselves in our members' shoes—they've worked every single day of the pandemic, their working environments have changed, they've put themselves at risk.

"And now, the reward for hundreds of our members is the prospect of the sack.

"This union cannot and will not accept that," he wrote in Tribune.

The article went on to threaten "the biggest trade union campaign the telecommunications sector has ever seen" if there isn't a deal that protects CWU members.

LEBANON IN REVOLT AFTER PORT EXPLOSION

LEBANESE PROTESTERS erect a mock gallows for their rulers in Beirut

'WE'RE FIGHTING WHOLE SYSTEM'

REVOLUTIONARY FROM BEIRUT SPEAKS OUT

"WE HAVE been fighting the system for a long time, now our anger has overflowed. The explosion at the harbour means we have to change everything."

"On Saturday we occupied the foreign ministry, the economy ministry, the energy ministry and the Association of Banks. The banking place we set on fire.

"Some of our revolutionaries brought a large crane to take apart a barricade set up to defend parliament."

Those are the words of Rasha in Beirut, Lebanon. He is one of the many thousands of protesters who defied tear gas, mass arrests and beatings on Saturday to demand the fall of the government and the political system.

Their protests followed a shattering explosion in the city's port area that killed over 150 people.

Around 2,750 tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate had been stored in the port for more than six years.

Lebanese customs officials

wrote letters to the courts at least six times between 2014 and 2017, seeking guidance on how to dispose of the material. But no action was taken.

As recently as six months ago, officials inspecting the consignment warned that it would "blow up all of Beirut".

On Tuesday last week it ignited. "The explosion is really a massacre," Rasha told Socialist Worker.

"It cannot be said to be an accident.

Corruption

"It is a symbol, and a result, of the corruption the government, and of a political regime that works for the powerful but not the poor.

"This was not some foreign enemy, it was a blow from the inside."

The protests last Saturday took place across large areas of the city centre, with people hurling down security force barricades and chanting, "Revolution! Revolution!"

Hundreds of people took over the foreign ministry building for several hours.

They hung red banners with a raised fist from the building, which had been damaged



Scenes of devastation after the blast in Beirut last week



The Beirut explosion means we have to change everything

in the blast, and proclaimed Beirut a "disarmed" city.

Thousands of people assembled in the central Martyrs' Square.

They erected gallows and conducted ceremonial hangings of effigies of politicians including president Michel Aoun, Nabih Berri, the speaker of parliament and Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah.

The New York Times newspaper reports, "The

protesters chanted 'the people want the fall of the regime' and held posters saying 'leave, you are all killers.'" Lebanon was already in crisis before the blast.

The economy is in freefall, banks have refused to give depositors access to their money, and unemployment and inflation have soared.

The number of coronavirus cases reported daily are accelerating and many parts of the country are suffering from lengthy power cuts.

Slogan

"Revolution" was the slogan of last October's protests in Lebanon that demanded an end to inequality, corruption and the sectarian political system.

The slogans on Beirut's streets now are similar to the ones that rang across the Middle East almost a decade ago and saw the fall of regimes in Tunisia and Egypt.

The scale of the protests now has forced prime minister Hassan Diab to say he will hold early elections.

But for many protesters that is not enough.

"We do not want just some changing of chairs among the

big ones as they are called," says Rasha.

"This cannot be a little thing that follows. These criminals blew our homes and took away our hopes."

Politicians who have appeared in public, including former prime minister Saad Hariri, have been attacked. Angry demonstrators told Hariri, "Don't you even think of returning to power."

Justice minister Marie-Claude Najm was followed through the streets of Beirut's Gemmayzeh neighbourhood last Thursday. Protesters threw water bottles at the minister.

Protesters are also angry at the police and army for their brutal treatment of those taking to the streets.

Sections of Lebanon's elite and Western governments will try to co-opt and use the protests. But they have all betrayed Lebanese people.

"The crisis in Lebanon is so deep that only change from top to bottom has a chance of saving us," says Rasha.

On other pages
Lebanon—legacies of empire>>>Pages 14&15